

# MANAS

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## A NEW "FRONTIER"

**M**ORE than one reader has found fault with the somewhat cavalier dismissal of the Soviet *sputnik* in MANAS for Dec. 25. An articulate critic exclaims: "When you say, 'What can you do with Sputnik?', . . . you reveal a lack of information, or of imagination, that surprises me." While acknowledging the dread implications of the military aspects of mechanical moons and intercontinental ballistic missiles, our correspondent urges the importance of another side of this scientific development—what might be called the Romance of Space. He writes:

Sputnik . . . and now the American "Explorer" . . . are the beginning of a new and wonderful frontier for mankind: the frontier of space. For several generations now, the challenge of a physical frontier has been lacking, and the opening up of a new and potentially inexhaustible field of exploration comes as a marvelous opportunity. To me, and I suspect to many others in the coming generation, it seems to be one of the few challenges that can become "the moral equivalent of war," and give scope for the urge to adventure, to creative invention, and to the expansiveness that is part of the nature of man. . . . even from a sociological point of view, the frustrations of an aimless life, that may lead to an acceptance of war as a relief from tedium, may best be alleviated through the opening of a new frontier into space.

The possibility of space travel is spoken of by this reader as promising opportunity to investigate "the existence, past or present, of other intelligent life in the solar system," which might, in turn, lead to increasing our understanding of "the philosophical and religious significance of the nature of life, and its distribution throughout the universe." In another paragraph, he proposes that philosophy must take cognizance of the revolutionary achievements of science:

From the time of ancient Greece, to the general desertion of the Biblical view of the universe in recent times, our views of the significance of man have changed with every new advance in scientific knowledge—to the detriment of conservative philosophies and beliefs. For some time, now, we have been approaching the limits of observational knowledge in the important field of cosmology that can be obtained from beneath the atmosphere. In order to understand many cosmological problems concerning the origin and nature of the universe, its size and dynamic structure, observations must now be made from outside the enveloping sea of air that prevents clear observation through our largest telescopes. Thus an observatory on the moon may well expand our knowledge in this field by many times. Few philosophers would deny that such cosmological matters have importance in themselves, and it is very likely that there will arise out of such new discoveries many new techniques that will change

our way, as well as our view, of life. Perhaps some keys to the mysteries of gravitational and magnetic fields may be found through these expanding investigations. . . .

Just as the bountiful power potential of the atom should not be abandoned because of our present dangerous interest in nuclear bombs, it is wrong to ignore the vast and wonderful frontier of space, simply because of some possible military applications.

Our correspondent develops a well-considered and symmetrical case for serious attention to the *sputniki*. There are three propositions. First, sputnik affords a challenging attraction to the aimless or misdirected energies of our time. It heralds the opening of a new frontier—with the power to draw out man's love for adventure.

Second, the ability to get outside the earth's atmosphere may provide access to new facts about the universe. We may be able to increase our scientific knowledge, and this has obvious and unquestioned value.

Third, philosophy has learned from science in the past, and may learn from this new conquest of nature. If the physical orbit of our lives can be enlarged, our philosophical orbit may gain corresponding extension.

These are our correspondent's suggestions. Let us consider them one by one.

There is no doubt but that, for men in immaturity, the intruding event, the exciting discovery, the enthralling new vista, has the power to interrupt a cycle of decline and degeneration and to give a new direction to the energies of men. This is a principle which is made use of by educators, starting with the kindergarten. Sometimes a child in a sulk or even a tantrum can be startled to a new level of attention by the dramatic exclamation of an unfamiliar word. There are endless illustrations of the constructive influence of a sudden change in the environment. The youth whose father dies, leaving a family needing care, may be saved from wasteful excesses by the new responsibility. The exposure of an ordinary man to sight of the extreme poverty and deprivation of others may turn him into a hero. The classic instance of this sort of transformation is found in the story of Gotama Buddha, who began shaping his life for the quest for truth about human suffering only after encountering a man who lay dying in the street of his father's city.

The "Frontier" theory of the development of American civilization, elaborated by Turner, is well known. Then

there is the sociological application of Turner's doctrine which maintains that the rise of juvenile delinquency and youthful crime in the United States has resulted from the fact that the frontier no longer exists to absorb the restless energies of the young and adventurous. Youth has no "outlet," so release is sought in the activities of juvenile gangs and hoodlums.

Now, our correspondent suggests, the prospect of colonizing "space" offers a brand new frontier.

Apart from philosophical issues, there are two obvious limitations which apply to the sputnik-created frontier. First, its invitation is entirely reserved for persons skilled in technology. For the rest, sputnik-riding or driving can never be more than a spectator-sport. The thrill of space travel, for at least a long interval, on even the most extravagant expectations of its development, will be vicarious for all but the very few. Most people will participate in the adventures of space travel no more than they participate in the new theoretical dispensations inaugurated in modern physics by relativity and quantum theory. The frontier welcomed by our correspondent, whatever its importance, is a frontier open only to highly trained specialists. And this, we submit, is exactly what a mass society already dominated by specialists and "experts" of every description, *does not need*.

Further, a frontier in much greater need of investigation, but one without the glamor of the sputniks, is the subjective world of our disordered feelings and unraveling thoughts. It is quite conceivable that an external frontier of the sort dramatized by sputnik excursions ought rather to be recognized as creating an unfortunate preoccupation which is likely to distract the young from other matters of far greater importance, such as growing up. The fascination of the sputniks may be only the higher hotrod-ism of the parents of the beat generation.

The second proposition of our correspondent is that the sputniks promise a means to greater knowledge about the outer reaches of the universe.

We have no doubt but that an excursion beyond the ionosphere—should it really be possible—would disclose a less biased view of the other planets and perhaps of our own earth as well. Let us stipulate that a more precise description of the physical universe would become available through observation posts in space. Let us even consider that we might gain facts concerning other intelligent inhabitants of the universe. But if we acknowledge these possibilities, we ought also to admit that, again, this gain in understanding would be limited to a handful of technologists. Theirs would be the thrill of achievement, theirs the actual increment of growth through discovery—a triumph, once more, of the specialists.

This triumph of the specialists is the pattern and signature of every distinctive greatness of Western civilization. It is a creation of technology. Space travel, even if we allow it all the potentialities claimed by our correspondent, would be entirely an achievement of technology. There remains, of course, the awkward question of how we would behave if the inhabitants of other parts of the solar system turned out to be Russian-type inhabitants!

The need of our time is not for more and greater technology. The vicarious enjoyment of the genius of mechanical and now electronic inventors holds no utopian promise for the people of the twentieth century. Our need is rather for a development of the human qualities, in which, today, *no* man is expert, save for the very few, such as Albert Schweitzer, M. K. Gandhi, and doubtless some others whose names remain unknown. This is where the hunger and the impoverishment of our times lie, and we want no new distractions to prolong the delay in our awakening to the fact. A man must still live his life, regardless of what the experts do. He cannot be a better man because of them. To think that he may is only a popular phase of the collectivist delusion.

The third proposition presented for examination is the claim that philosophy is augmented and even changed by the revelations of scientific discovery.

This proposition, we are moved to insist, is both true and false. It is true in the sense that all knowledge, all perceptions, are grist for philosophy's mill. As the area of external vision grows, the area of internal vision may likewise enlarge, since the more of the world we understand, the more we understand of ourselves. We are not separate and apart, we and the world; the world is our alter ego.

But it is false to suppose that science can in any significant sense revise the fundamental postulates of philosophy, which are given in the experience of *consciousness*. Science may be a successful critic of bad thinking, but it cannot replace the axioms of authentic philosophy. What are those axioms? There are many ways of stating them—ways which vary with the centuries and the tropisms of the mind—but they never change in essentials. They are, first, that the thinking self is a real identity with the power to know truth. The power may suffer limitation, but it nonetheless exists and is real. Second, that all knowing results from the perception of order or law, which manifests in our experience through the regularities and repetitions of both the subjective and the objective phenomena of the natural world. Third, that our lives have a meaning, and that this meaning may be in some measure realized by determined effort and search.

Scientific discovery may augment the field of human experience but it cannot change the principles of learning or philosophizing. It has no power to take away the autonomy of man, the thinker, although men have sometimes fallen prey to this delusion.

What can we do with Sputnik? We can recognize it as another and rather extraordinary symptom of the unbalanced character of our civilization—not of the unbalanced character of modern physics, which is, after all, only a technical system, like other technical systems, however excellent—but of our emotional dependence upon such wonders of technology. We may, perhaps, learn some lessons from the sputniks, but only if we take them as a kind of parable. As a MANAS reader recently suggested:

A person floundering in a sea of contradictory beliefs may be encouraged to evaluate his half-existence for what it is. Just as it takes a specific momentum to propel a satellite out of the earth's influence, to become a semi-autonomous body of itself, so it takes tremendous encouragement and volition to free the mind from the fetters of heresy and dogma.



### "RACE PREJUDICE AS SELF REJECTION"

LAURENS VAN DER POST, author of *The Dark Eye in Africa* (reviewed in MANAS for May 26, 1956), offers a remarkable analysis of prejudice in an address before the Workshop for Cultural Democracy in New York City (December, 1956). This extemporaneous lecture was taped and is now available in pamphlet form from the Workshop for Cultural Democracy, 204 East 18th St., New York 3, at fifty cents per copy. The introduction by Nathan Sherman describes its contents:

The burden of Col. van der Post's approach to the crucial issue of race prejudice is that racism is a projection of our own self-rejection. Before we can help others in this fundamental area of human relationships, we must turn into ourselves to find the solution to this most crucial of problems facing mankind today—this rejection in ourselves, in society, in civilization. In some way, we must come to terms with the rejected aspects of our lives, or the result will be another disaster. Unless we do this, we will continue to project our own self-rejection onto the life around us. We will continue to blame other persons, societies, nations and races for that in ourselves which we fear. This projected animosity, multiplied among us, leads to the strife that ends in hate, violence and, eventually, to war.

The Workshop for Cultural Democracy believes that Col. van der Post articulates, in terms of the individual and of society, the growing awareness of the depth of man's psychological state, showing both the dangers and the vast resources he may find in his subconscious as he labors to achieve freedom of heart and mind. With Mr. Justice William O. Douglas, of the United States Supreme Court, we believe that Laurens van der Post details "the undertones and overtones which herald the vast disaster confronting mankind if the white and dark continents of the world do not resolve their basic conflicts."

Col. van der Post thinks like a mystic, but a mystic who has seen the world and who identifies himself dynamically with its deep-rooted psychic problems. He feels that, despite our researches and scholarship, we have alienated ourselves from knowledge we can truly call our own, remarking that "modern man is a deeply and profoundly displaced person. We all live in an age of essentially displaced people. We are all people who have lost this 'I know, you know' look. We have lost the inner sense of belonging because we have been so extremely one-sided in our development." And yet, "there is an immense meaning, a meaningful activity, in all of us which transcends words, and even transcends action. That activity is presented to us in terms of images. And these images are always greater and more powerful than the use to which we can put them, and the expression which we can give to them. I think that is absolutely basic. There is this immense world of images that comes up and there is this image of the shadow. And a human being is not truly real unless he has a shadow. When human beings acknowledge that, they see it instinctively. If only we could come back to this natural side of ourselves, to see meaning instinctively as well as intellectually! The old Chinese recog-

nized it. Their way of greeting another person was to say, 'May your shadow never get less'."

The true work against barriers of race, to Mr. van der Post, is the work of each man's spiritual quest. We are, as it were, engaged in fighting demons as we create and live our own myth. To understand Christianity clearly would be to see the life of Christ as symbolic of each man's journey to enlightenment—nor does only the Christian myth tell the tale:

At the beginning of all this mythological activity, at the beginning of everything always, there is the image of a journey. In fact, I think the whole of the religious approach to life is the awakening of the sense of the journey in the human being. And right at the beginning, immediately when man sees himself on the earth and separated from God, he finds himself on the first step of the journey, the Journey of the Garden, the garden to which he can never go back because over the gate stands an angel with a flaming sword in his hands. We cannot go back, once life presupposes a going on.

And as the myth develops, we get really into the finding of self. There is the terrific journey out of Egypt, this journey out of the land of civilization, culture, and plenty, which has become a land of bondage. It is interesting that in the myth there is bondage in civilization. There is a certain kind of imprisonment out of which the people who live the myth, have to move. Here is the very moving, awakening, necessity of the journey first of all in the heart of one individual who is terrified and afraid; the child who is found in a river among the bulrushes, is called to perform the journey and shirks it; he runs away from it, and is terrified, thinking that he will never have the power to do this, that it is an impossible thing, and yet he does it.

One can say that Col. van der Post is simply discussing "attitudes," but what, from the psychological point of view, can possibly be more important? And van der Post does know and has lived the problem of race in Africa. He was born some fifty years ago on that continent, and is known as a soldier, explorer and government administrator, as well as a writer. What Mr. van der Post knows, the reader intuitively feels, is something that everyone needs to know and *can* know, whatever his race, condition or political environment:

We in Africa have to come to terms, as soon as possible, with the dark people in our society, and we can only do it, I think, by coming to terms first with the spirit in ourselves, with this natural person in ourselves.

It seems to me that the most important matter before us at this moment is to find a way of fighting against evil in such a manner that we do not become just another aspect of the thing we are fighting against, which seems to be going on all over the world. I have seen this happen so much in my own lifetime. I have seen people fight against what they call colonialism and imperialism and get their way, merely to become another form of the colonialism and the imperialism they are fighting against. The problem is to fight against evil in such a way that we do not become the evil itself. There is a very old French proverb, and a very wise one, which says that all human beings tend to become the things they oppose. To avoid this, we must accept full responsibility for our actions. If we do that we must also expect that others will

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### NO HIDING PLACE...

WHILE this series on the "beat generation" is running in "Children... and Ourselves," there is point in recalling other phenomena of youthful rejection of the status quo. Writing in the November-December 1951 *Partisan Review*, Hannah Arendt, who has probably thrown more light on the nihilistic revolutions of the twentieth century than any other social thinker, had this to say about the revolutionary aspects of the Nazi movement at its beginnings:

Since the bourgeoisie claimed to be the guardian of Western traditions and confounded all moral issues by parading publicly virtues which it not only did not possess in private and in business life, but actually held in contempt, it seemed revolutionary to admit cruelty, disregard of human values, and general amorality, because this at least destroyed the duplicity upon which the existing society seemed to rest. What a temptation to flaunt extreme attitudes in the hypocritical twilight of double moral standards, to wear publicly the mask of cruelty if everybody was patently inconsiderate and pretended to be gentle, to parade wickedness in a world, not of wickedness, but of meanness.

"Bourgeoisie" is a term not in good odor in the United States, where the class divisions of the Old World have melted into an almost wholly uniform mass society. But the offenses assigned by Miss Arendt to the bourgeoisie are now so widespread as to be easily found—wherever the vice of conformity is practiced, there is hypocrisy, too.

If you do not have patience—more, if you do not have compassion—the only weapons which can be used with effect against the sly double-dealing of hypocritical conventions and pious pretense often seem to be violence and a towering rage. They are no good, of course. They do not set you free, but to be victimized by routinized fraud is likely to enrage the man who discovers what is happening to him.

You can't reason with lies and lying. Hypocritical pretense corrupts communications. Relations with liars and pretenders are degrading to all but saints. That is why the betrayer, the turncoat, the pretender, so often comes to a violent end. His speech has no meaning, so why try to have speech with him?

Miss Arendt writes of the alliance in Nazi Germany between the intellectual elite and the mob—the ones above and the ones below conventional respectability who joined forces to produce the abortive Nazi revolution.

Well, we killed off a lot of the Nazis and drove underground the gross manifestations of Nazism which survived the war. But we have not made an end of hypocrisy. The

### REVIEW—(Continued)

accept full responsibility for their *reactions*. Those are the two halves that make the whole. We are not going to get out of these grave racialisms and other problems if we do not accept these two ends of the problem. The reaction must also be right. No matter how badly one person behaves, it does not absolve the other person from reacting in the right way. That is our immense dilemma at the moment. I think that the only answer is to turn to these spiritual sources in our natural selves, to turn to the source where we find the dream, a good dream. The primitive people of Africa say that there is a dream dreaming us. It is a good dream. The only trouble is we live it badly.

You can find the dream in the natural part of yourself. If you turn to it you will find that in it there is no sense of displacement. That is where you belong. If you can somehow transcend the kind of civil war from which we are all suffering, the war between our natural selves and our so-called civilized selves, you will lose your sense of displacement. Above all is the very fact that we can share our sense of displacement. The minute you realize that you are not the only one, you realize that you are not displaced, because you belong to something which in a sense does not yet exist. You belong to a community which is coming. At once you are at home. To me the most exciting thing in the world today is that the moment one speaks of these matters, one finds that he really is not alone.

pretense to morality and other psychological causes of the revolution of nihilism are still on hand.

And the revolt is still going on. Here in America, and wherever there is a "beat generation," there is protest against a life of submission to the lies and pretenses of convention, and to the inadequate emotional content of a life according to the "rules" of conventional society.

There is a difference, of course. "The spirit of non-interference with the lives of others" was not a Nazi principle, either early or late. But the quest for intensity through excess is a typical response of the rebel, then and now. And contempt for "respectable" society—for the "squares" who are obedient to the conventions—is another common manifestation. No doubt others can be found.

These are the symptoms of a sick society, and whatever we decide to think or say about them, we need to take to heart the profound truth of Miss Arendt's comment:

Simply to brand as outbursts of nihilism this violent dissatisfaction... is to overlook how justified disgust can be in a society wholly permeated with the ideological outlook and moral standards of the bourgeoisie.

**MANAS** is a journal of independent inquiry, concerned with study of the principles which move world society on its present course, and with search for contrasting principles — that may be capable of supporting intelligent idealism under the conditions of life in the twentieth century. **MANAS** is concerned, therefore, with philosophy and with practical psychology, in as direct and simple a manner as its editors and contributors can write. The word "manas" comes from a common root suggesting "man" or "the thinker." Editorial articles are unsigned, since **MANAS** wishes to present ideas and viewpoints, not personalities.

The Publishers

## CHILDREN ... and Ourselves

### DISCUSSION OF A GENERATION: V

IN a rejoinder to Jean Malaquais' "Reflections on Hipsterism" in the *Winter Dissent*, Norman Mailer supports his optimism concerning "the beat generation":

The hipster, rebel cell in our social body, lives out, acts out, follows the close call of his instinct as far as he dares, and so points to possibilities and consequences in what have hitherto been chartless jungles of moral nihilism. The essence of his expression, his faith if you will, is that the real desire to make a better world exists at the heart of our instinct (that instinctual vision of a human epic which gave birth to consciousness itself), that man is therefore roughly more good than evil, that beneath his violence there is finally love and the nuances of justice, and that the removal therefore of all social restraints while it would open us to an area of incomparable individual violence would still spare us the collective violence of rational totalitarian liquidations (which we must accept was grossly a psychic index of the buried, voiceless, and ineradicable violences of whole nations of people), and would—and here is the difference—by expending the violence directly open the possibility of working with that human creativity which is violence's opposite.

Jack Kerouac, author of *On the Road*, carries this hopeful view one step further, attempting to make almost a positive religion out of what seems errant madness to the average adult. Writing in *Pageant* for February, Kerouac insists that the "Beat Generation" is not bitter, and that the sort of hipsters he writes about do not "put down life." He concludes:

I only hope there won't be a war to hurt all these beautiful people, and I don't think there will be. There appears to be a Beat Generation all over the world, even behind the Iron Curtain. I think Russia wants a share of what America has—food and clothing and pleasures for most everyone.

I prophesy that the Beat Generation which is supposed to be nutty nihilism in the guise of new hipness, is going to be the most sensitive generation in the history of America and therefore it can't help but do good. Whatever wrong comes will come out of evil interference. If there is any quality that I have noticed more strongly than anything else in this generation, it is the spirit of non-interference with the lives of others.

But to balance this glowing portrait, let us turn back to Herbert Gold in the *Nation* for Nov. 16. Commenting on Kerouac's philosophy and psychology, he writes that for such articulate prophets of the Beat Generation's psyche, "the ultimate goal is that single small step beyond madness. What Kerouac wants is what the mystics driven by fright in all ages want, 'the complete step across chronological time into timeless shadows'." Gold continues:

The experience he craves is simple, dark and in any case inevitable to all of us sooner or later—immolation. He is not content to wait. Mortality terrifies him; better death at once than the long test of life. He expresses this fantasy with convulsive violence, trying to disguise the truth from himself and from the reader, using breathlessness as a surrogate for energy. But he is compelled.

Make of all this what you will. In the literary world—apart from Kerouac—we find reflections of the alternating desire for the transcendence and the immolation which Mr. Gold describes. Here J. D. Salinger and James Jones may serve as examples. Salinger in particular appears to

many of the younger generation as a proved interpreter of the sort of psychic travail they know well. "Non-conformism" is only part of the answer, for the typical non-conformist believes he is rebelling in order to achieve some transformation of society. Not so with Salinger's Holden Caulfield, who has no such beliefs or pretensions. Discussing Salinger in the *Winter Chicago Review*, William Wiegand notes that Caulfield is a perfect example of "intelligent, highly sensitive, affectionate beings fighting curious gruelling battles, leaderless and causeless, in a world they never made." Wiegand continues:

In simple terms, they are non-conformists. Logically, the enemy of the non-conformist is society or some oppressive segment of society; and in the recent tradition from Sinclair Lewis's *Arrowsmith* and Hemingway's *Frederick Henry* right down to Ayn Rand's *Howard Roark*, the non-conformist hero is constantly threatened by external forces which seek to inhibit and to destroy him. With the Salinger hero, however, the conflict is never so cleanly drawn. Holden does not leave the fencing team's foils on the subway because of any direct external pressure, nor does he flunk out of Pencey and the other schools because of unreasonable demands made on him. Holden knows this as well as anybody. He is a victim not so much of society as of his own spiritual illness.

Salinger, in other words, poses a basic common problem, but in a manner quite different from that of the bygone "radical," and he seems "real" to members of the beat generation. As Wiegand remarks, "Holden Caulfield's trouble is not that he hates, or that he fears, or, as Aldridge suggests, that he has no goals—but rather that he has no capacity to purge his sensations."

Part of the "beatness" of this generation brings acknowledgement of something never before accepted by young people—that there are no true values, either good or bad, save those found in fleeting moments of emotional experience. Strangely enough, in this particular context, such an irreligious affirmation does not necessarily lead to disgust with the world, but often rather in the direction of tolerance—the attitude which Norman Mailer called "the spirit of non-interference with the lives of others." Yet Herbert Gold suggests that "the traveler" of *On the Road* yearns for "great death-in-life to fill the boredom. He is fading away because of boredom, since nothing can make him happy, nothing can enlist him for more than a few spasmodic jerks, and the mad ones seem in his eyes to have an inner purpose."

Returning to the February *Esquire* and John C. Holmes—the man who apparently first put the term "beat" in print to represent the puzzling members of this generation—we find a suggestive analysis of the popularity of the late James Dean:

It would be well to remember what Norman Mailer, in a recent article on the hipster, said about the hip language: "What makes [it] a special language is that it cannot really be taught—if one shares none of the experiences of elation and exhaustion which it is equipped to describe, then it seems merely arch or vulgar or irritating." This is also true to a large extent of the whole reality in which the members of the Beat Generation have grown. If you can't see it the way they do, you can't understand the way they act. One way to see it, perhaps the easiest, is to investigate the image they have of themselves.

A large proportion of this generation lived vicariously in the short, tumultuous career of actor James Dean. He was  
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RELIGION

SCIENCE

EDUCATION

# FRONTIERS

## Nobody Knows How to Stop a War

A READING of Alfred Vagts' *History of Militarism* (Norton, 1937) makes it plain that there has been little or no progress in the past 150 years in the control of war. Writing of the early nineteenth century, Vagts says:

During the period under review, . . . militarism and Liberalism grew up side by side, as bourgeois enriched himself and officer entrenched himself. Neither element made trial of the other's strength; but though the nobility recognized and feared the growth of Liberalism and sought constantly to hinder it, the Liberals tended to ignore the military problem and left the conduct of military affairs carelessly in other hands.

Democracy, Vagts points out, evolved no philosophy or agency of control over the military. Nor were the rising bourgeoisie, rapidly becoming rich, really averse to war. While they talked of and planned for peace, the British threw themselves into the Crimean War with considerable enthusiasm. An editor of the London *Times* warned that "This nation is a good deal enervated by a long peace," and another writer urged that entering a military contest on the side of the Turks would evoke "the most heroic and Christian virtues in every citizen"! Of this period, the German field marshal, von Moltke, wrote:

It is no longer the ambition of princes; it is the moods of the people, the discomfort in the face of interior conditions, the doings of parties, particularly of their leaders, which endanger peace. The great battles of recent history have started against the wish and the will of the governors. The Exchange has obtained in our days an influence which is able to call the armed forces into the field for their interest.

While no modern nation will now undertake war in a holiday spirit, going off to fight as an antidote to ennui and the dull days of commercial prosperity, the "governors" have no more real control, today, than they had a century ago. Little more than "the moods of the people" and "the doings of parties, particularly of their leaders," stands in the way of practical measures for peace. If the people were to demand steps toward reconciliation with other nations, the governors would soon find a way of taking them. But the people—save for a handful of pacifists and a handful of intelligent and honorable citizens and public servants, men like Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas—do not insist upon anything but the justification of their prejudices. And those prejudices are constantly fed by irresponsible spokesmen—circulation-seeking editors, columnists, and neurotic rabble-rousers.

There is no dearth of facts concerning the direction in which we are moving. The liberal magazines give us an endless supply of such facts. In the *Nation* for Feb. 15, for example, Walter Millis, a man who has given a lifetime of study to the social processes which produce war, discusses the contemporary arms race, showing that it is far more serious than any preceding rivalry between nations. Ironi-

cally enough, it was the Czar of Russia who, in 1898, first appealed to the countries of Europe to suspend their competitive preparation for war. His ministers declared that the continuation of armament-building "would inevitably lead to the very cataclysm it is desired to avert." They were right, of course. The "cataclysm" came in 1914. Thus was established, as Millis says, "the 'classic' pattern of the arms race leading directly to war."

The present arms race, he says, has peculiar horror for two reasons. First, "it centers almost exclusively on weapons of mass extermination which no ingenuity has as yet sufficed to reduce to the useful political and social purposes which war (an 'instrument of policy, continued by other means') has immemorially served." Second, it is more than ever before a race in technology, with wholly unexpected upsets possible at any time. There can be no reliable expectation of a balance of power. Each new invention in the field of military technology starts the race anew:

This kind of thing is now happening every six months. The atomic bomb produces the hydrogen bomb. We establish intermediate-range bomber bases around the Soviet Union in order to make sure that we can deliver our deterrent on Russian vital centers; the Russians are pressed to push forward their intermediate-range rocket development so that they can make sure of "taking out" the air bases before the planes are launched. The inaccuracy of even intermediate-range ballistic missiles means that they will have to be armed with megaton bombs to take out the bases. We propose to put megaton-bomb missiles into Europe which can take out Soviet cities in reprisal. . . .

It goes on and on. This is only half of Mr. Millis' long paragraph on the horrid spiral of competing technologies of destruction. The "peace offensives" of both countries are abortive for much the same psychological reasons:

Given the fact of a common dilemma, a common peril, a common necessity for substantial peace if any of the objectives of either the Communist or Western world are to be achieved, it does seem that there is some better way than a continued building of what General Bradley has called "this electronic house of cards"—a technological arms race pyramiding in ever greater instability and uncertainty to the point of collapse in which a thousand years of civilization are likely to perish.

Mr. Millis, it may be said, is a gloomy prophet, but he is a mere historian. The authorities today, we insist, are the scientists themselves. Well, the scientists, some of them, at least—in particular, the scientists not in the employ of the government—are gloomier still. The January issue of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* has some "New Year's Thoughts" by its editor, Eugene Rabinowitch, which are more depressing than anything Mr. Millis could find to say.

Mr. Rabinowitch believes it is now too late to hope for any effective means of controlling the arms race. The point is this: When any nation succeeds in developing inter-



continental ballistic missiles with nuclear warheads, and finishes building concealed and effectively located bases from which to launch them, control has become technically impossible. And when control is impossible, no nation will be satisfied until it has a comparable system of "defense." The Soviets have the ICBM's and they have the bases. Accordingly, control is impossible and armament "must" go on. Or, as Mr. Rabinowitch puts it: "In the absence of a radical change in international relations, the arms race will go on and on."

Adding what will probably seem insult to injury to adolescent Americans, Mr. Rabinowitch points out that the technological advantages of the United States are about to be lost. He quotes in evidence of this an article of his own ("A Last Chance") from the *Bulletin* for June, 1956:

"There is a tendency in America to believe that to stop the development of advanced technological weapons, even on a truly reciprocal basis, would, on the balance, damage the U.S. and favor the Soviet Union. It has been so often stated that the military strength of America lies in its technological leadership, while that of Russia lies in its inexhaustible manpower, that this is accepted as permanent. . . . However, the situation is changing. Ever since 1945, atomic scientists have pointed out that *in the long run*, the existence of atomic weapons will bring more advantages to the Soviet Union than to America. . . . The rapid advance of Soviet atomic technology and military aviation is about to make this long-range prediction come true."

For those who place their faith in American know-how and engineering genius, these must be terrifying thoughts. And for those who have relied on our "leadership," and upon the mightily righteous justifications of all our sabrerattling, they will probably prove to be enraging thoughts, for when the highest authorities fail us, where can we go for relief except to the dark caverns of mindless emotion? Even Mr. Rabinowitch can find little to cheer him, and he seems to be a wholly rational man.

Some may say [he writes] that these are thoughts of despair. If we cannot look forward to progress in disarmament—except perhaps in areas which will not affect the capacity for instantaneous mutual destruction; if we are to stop calling for the cessation of nuclear weapons tests—at least as long as the development of anti-missile weapons remains the most urgent part of the arms race; if mankind is condemned to live indefinitely on the edge of a precipice, into which not only the rashness of a dictator but even the foolishness of a subordinate, can plunge it—what can we do but simply live unto the day and hope for a miracle? What good is a *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* if it can merely show the dangers and discount all remedies?

His answer is that "facing up" to facts is never merely "negative." But beyond this he has little to say, except to appeal for a world "able to prevent the misuse of the powers of science for the self-destruction of mankind."

So these, insofar as we can know them, are "the facts." But these facts, however much those familiar with them may be impressed, are obviously not enough to affect "the moods of the people" and "the doings of parties." The people have need of being startled into giving such facts their attention; they have need of being awakened from their lethargy and from their pathetic reliance upon "authorities" who have neither knowledge nor responsibility. That, at any rate, is what we sometimes think.

But it is even a question whether the popular mind is

capable of dealing with such facts. It may be that the direct approach in matters of this sort would be too frightening, too overwhelming, and that a more basic education in human attitudes is what we must begin with.

Obviously, the moods of people in respect to war and the threat of war are largely determined by their feelings of righteousness and their sense of being put upon by others. The man ready to go to war is the man aggrieved and resentful, filled with indignation. Such emotions accomplish a black-out of rational judgment of issues. It is, therefore, these feelings which have to be reformed, before there can be any real hope of peace among the nations. And we can hardly hope for a re-assessment of justice and right from the governments of the world. Such illuminations must come from the people themselves, from the private voices of the people. The people must learn to speak to one another about these things. They must become willing to re-educate one another, learn from one another. And private publishers and editors will have to give all the help they can to this process.

We have an illustration of the kind of communication that seems needed in a statement written in 1945 by the American poet, Kenneth Patchen. It concerns an older American poet, Ezra Pound, and the judgments then circulating about Pound, on the occasion of his return to the United States, under arrest, after having been vocally active during the war in support of the Italian fascists. This statement, printed below, is preceded by a note of introduction recently prepared by Mr. Patchen.

#### EZRA POUND'S GUILT

[The following statement was written in response to a request from the newspaper *PM*. It was to have been used in a symposium of poets on "The Case For and Against Ezra Pound"; however, it was not printed in *PM*—the editors explained that space limitations prevented their using it. Of the six invited statements, only mine experienced this difficulty . . . in that Year of Grace, 1945.—K.P.]

Ezra Pound chose one authority and most of you chose another. The authority he chose turned Europe into a hell of concentration camps and human misery; the authority chosen by most of you has left Europe and the whole world in a hell of concentration camps and human misery.

Not to mince words, Pound chose one head of that grisly, bloodsmeared serpent called war, and most of you chose another; both were evil, both preyed on the warm, living bodies of human beings—both were Fascist. As people with even the remotest knowledge of the teachings of Christ and of every other great soul who ever lived, you should know what I am talking about.

Pound was anti-Semitic; I suppose he was pleased when they herded the Jews into camps— . . . (and who are, to all intents and purposes, still in camps). . . . You were told (officially) to hate those "dirty little subhuman yellow bastards"; I suppose you were pleased in the same way when they tore up the Constitution of the United States, and proceeded to herd Japanese-American citizens into concentration camps.

I condemn Pound for having chosen an evil authority; here he is guilty—and so are the rest of you.

## IN DEFENSE OF POETRY

Let us not confuse issues. I am writing in defense of poetry and in defense of that high view of human beings which is poetry's; I am defending the poet Pound against that other Pound who defiled and rejected the spirit—even as most of you have defiled and rejected them.

I am writing in defense of the right of all men to live decently and at peace on this earth. I am defending the majesty that is in all men of every color and nationality against nearly every artist and writer in our "civilized" world—these shameful turncoats and betrayers who spoke out for death, not for life—against any and all who were the spokesmen for the murder of human beings.

This other Pound, like most of you, chose to live by the rules and codes of a society whose whole coloring is hatred and evil; is it too much to suppose that he will now wish to be dealt with as a "member-in-good-standing" of that society? that he will continue to accept the decisions of that society as just and wise? For myself, I do not believe that any man has the right to deprive another man of his freedom; and I certainly do not believe that any man who has deprived anyone of life or freedom, is fit to sit in judgment over his fellows. What a monstrous farce!—these trials of those accused of "war guilt"—and tried by whom? By the most utterly cynical gang of war-makers the world has ever known. By what right under God do these have to speak of the guilt or innocence of anyone!

Truth—spit on truth! Justice, mercy, humanity—ask the slaughtered dead to define them for you! The teachings of Christ—spit on the teachings of Christ! *Thou shalt not kill*—who ever heard of such nonsense? How could we win the war if we didn't kill? How could we enslave the peoples of the earth if we didn't keep them hating and killing one another?

## WHAT WAS YOUR VICTORY?

You see, people wouldn't kill and hate one another if they weren't put up to it. And that's the only hope that any of you have. This madness—this madness of thinking you can put down evil and murder by becoming instruments of evil and murder yourselves; look about you! is there less evil now? is there less fear? is there less hatred? What was your victory? Where is the triumph? The image of Hitler grins down on this gray devastation, on this desert where the soul of mankind bleeds itself out into the sands of an incomprehensible horror. Victory—we all stand under the threat that the very blood of the stars will be made to weep down upon us!

## THEIR AUTHORITY IS EVIL

Let this be made clear. There is no man in authority anywhere who is not guilty. All their authority is evil—founded on hatred and darkness, not on love; designed to destroy, not to save.

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*And now they have the power to kill all of us. It is too late to think that they won't do it.*

God must think that you have all gone mad—seeing you waiting uncaring as drugged sheep for them to blow everything to hell.

I am writing in defense of life. I am writing in defense of poetry, in defense of love, in defense of beauty—in defense, to speak bluntly—of all the mysteries and ecstasies which most of you have seen reason to deny and despise.

Only a few men in any age write great poetry; Ezra Pound is one of these.

Let the Hitlers among you take his books off the shelves.

Let the Hitlers among you spit on his work.

The poems, which never heard of that other Pound, will be honored.

Pound, the poet, I honor; the Pound who accepted the ethics and values which most of you find wise and just, has lost—whatever "his peers" may decide to do to him; he has lost the touch of an angel on his arm.

Poetry—and a love for poetry—is bigger than the judgment of any military court; it is bigger than any decision which crime-hardened men can make; I think it is even bigger than the cold-blooded assassins who gave atomic power into the hands of your particular authority—these madmen in careful dinnercoats who have opened the gates on the darkness, who have dealt a death blow to the human imagination.

KENNETH PATCHEN

## CHILDREN—(Continued)

their idol in much the same way that Valentino was the screen idol of the Twenties, and Clark Gable was the screen idol of the Thirties. But there was a difference, and it was *all* the difference. In Dean, they saw not a daydream Lothario who was more attractive, mysterious and wealthy than they were, or a virile man of action with whom they could fancifully identify to make up for their own feelings of powerlessness, but a wistful, reticent youth, looking over the abyss separating him from older people with a level, saddened eye; living intensely in alternate explosions of tenderness and violence; eager for love and a sense of purpose, but able to accept them only on terms which acknowledged the facts of life as he knew them: in short, themselves.

To many people, Dean's mumbling speech, attenuated silences, and rash gestures seemed the ultimate in empty mannerisms, but the young generation knew that it was not so much that he was inarticulate or affected as it was he was unable to believe in some of the things his scripts required him to say. He spoke to them right through all the expensive make-believe of million-dollar productions, saying with his sighs, and the prolonged shifting of his weight from foot to foot: "Well, I suppose there's no way out of this, but we know how it *really* is. . . ." They knew he was lonely, they knew he was flawed, they knew he was confused. But they also knew that he "dug," and so they delighted in his sloppy clothes and untrimmed hair and indifference to the proprieties of fame. He was not what they wanted to be; he was what they *were*. He lived hard and without complaint; and he died as he lived, going fast.

Among other actors, the appeal of Marlon Brando and Paul Newman seems similarly based, for their most effective roles portray not the usual hero image, but what Holmes calls "the glimpse of a single human soul caught in the contradictions and absurdity of modern life."



